

Now is not the time to raise taxes, add mandates, and put jobs in jeopardy. This massive, all-at-once approach is a very risky experiment with 16 percent of our economy. It is a huge gamble. It is a dangerous risk being taken with our health care.

Common sense tells us that change is needed in this arena, but how about a step at a time to see if that change works, and then we can move forward to the next step. We can take positive steps. But opt-outs, out-ins, co-ops, exchanges, triggers—they are illusions and not solutions.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 5½ minutes remaining in morning business.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask the Presiding Officer to inform me when I have 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. President, the House of Representatives passed, by just five votes, a health care reform bill over the weekend. Some said it was historic. It is, indeed, historic. It is a combination of higher premiums, higher taxes, Medicare cuts, and more Federal Government debt.

Millions of Americans, if it were to pass, will be forced into government plans when their employers stop offering health care insurance.

As a former Governor of Tennessee, I simply do not see how Tennessee can pay for its part of the Medicaid expansion without imposing a new State income tax and damaging higher education or both.

Health care reform is supposed to be about reducing costs, not increasing costs. Instead of raising taxes, raising premiums, Medicare cuts, more debt, and transferring new costs to States, we should be taking steps toward reducing health care costs.

On the Republican side, we proposed a number of those, starting with small business health plans which would allow small businesses to pool together their resources and offer insurance to their employees. That would be a good place to start. The Congressional Budget Office has said that the small business health care plan which Senator ENZI has proposed and is waiting for us to pass would reduce the cost of Medicaid, would increase the number of insured by 750,000 at least, and would lower the cost of insurance for 3 out of 4 small business employees.

So instead of this 2,000-page bill that raises premiums, raises costs, cuts Medicare, and increases the debt, why

don't we start step by step to reduce costs?

I was privileged to attend the White House fiscal responsibility summit in February. The President invited me, and I was glad to go. He talked then about what is obvious about our country's fiscal situation and said that putting America on a sustainable fiscal course "will require addressing health care."

Then, at the President's White House health reform summit in March, the President himself introduced the "b" word, the "bankruptcy" word, which I am beginning to hear more and more about as these bills come toward us. The President said:

If we don't address costs, I don't care how heartfelt our efforts are, we will not get this done. If people think we can simply take everybody who is not insured and load them up in a system where costs are out of control, it's not going to happen.

This is President Obama talking in March:

We will run out of money. The Federal Government will be bankrupt; state governments will be bankrupt.

Well, that is the "b" word. That is our President talking. I think we should listen to those words and the repeated warnings from careful advisers that the cost of these health care proposals is going to get us in a state of fiscal ruin.

Here in Washington, we hear more about the Federal deficit, not so much about the condition of our States. At one time, maybe half the Senators were former Governors, as the Presiding Officer is and I was. Today, I think it is 12. But those of us who can remember those days remember what it was like trying to control Medicaid costs.

Governor Bredesen, a Democrat of Tennessee, told us over the weekend, our State—he told all of us that the House-passed bill will add \$1.4 billion to the State budget over 5 years. If that is the case—and I know it is hard to put billions, trillions, jillions together up here and make them make sense, but let me try to make sense of what that could mean for our State, which is a conservative, well-run State. I don't see how the State of Tennessee could pay for its State share of the expanded Medicaid Program without instituting a new income tax or without seriously damaging higher education or both. And that is just one part of the new cost.

So what we are saying to the American people is, let's read this bill, let's know what it costs, and let's see how it affects you.

We will be seeing a Senate bill coming out from behind the closed doors of the majority leader within a few days. We look forward to debating it. We look forward to moving ahead with health care reform. But to us, raising premiums, costs, and taxes and cutting Medicare is not health care reform. Reducing costs with small business health plans, competition across State lines,

reducing junk lawsuits against doctors—that is the direction we ought to go if we want to avoid seeing that "b" word show up on the front pages of our newspapers more and more.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3082, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3082) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Johnson/Hutchison amendment No. 2730, in the nature of a substitute.

Udall (NM) amendment No. 2737 (to amend amendment No. 2730), to make available from Medical Services \$150 million for homeless veterans comprehensive service programs.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am here to discuss a very important matter that I had intended to bring up in the Judiciary Committee last week but the agenda did not allow it. It is about the oversight of the Department of Justice and the responses provided by Attorney General Holder to questions from the Judiciary Committee. Two weeks ago, Chairman LEAHY—and I thank him for participating—and I sent a letter to the Attorney General asking him to stand by his statements made during his confirmation and answer a number of outstanding requests for information. That list includes questions submitted by members of the Judiciary Committee to an FBI oversight hearing over 1½ years ago. We all agreed no committee should have to wait that long to get answers to oversight questions.

Last Friday, the Judiciary Committee received answers from the Attorney General following his June 17,